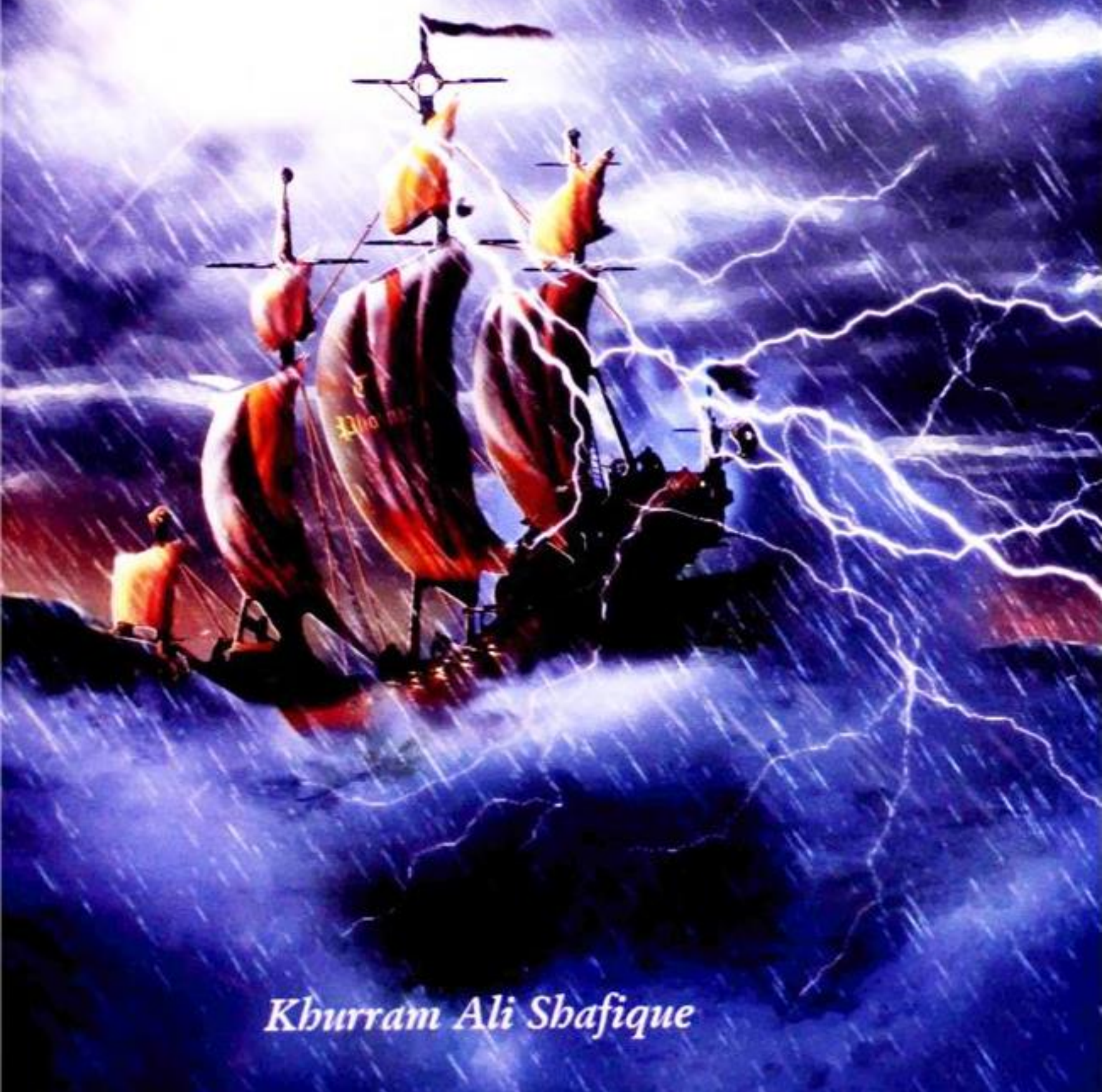
SHAKESPEARE ACCORDING TO IQBAL

An Alternative Reading of *The Tempest*



Khurram Ali Shafique

SHAKESPEARE
according to
IQBAL

An Alternative Reading of *The Tempest*

Khurram Ali Shafique

IQBAL ACADEMY PAKISTAN

IQBAL ACADEMY BROCHURE SERIES NO. – 57
Muhammad Suheyl Umar, Editor

ISBN 978-969-416-448-9

©2010

Iqbal Academy Pakistan
6th Floor, Aiwan-e-Iqbal Complex,
Off Egerton Road, Lahore.
Tel:[+ 92-42-36314510, 99203573,
Fax:[+ 92-42] 631-4496
Email: director@iap.gov.pk
Website: www.allamaiqbal.com

Publisher	:	Director, Iqbal Academy Pakistan
Writer	:	Khurram Ali Shafique
1st Edition	:	2010
Quantity	:	1000
Price	:	Rs. 70 USS 2
Title Design	:	Khalid Faisal
Printed at	:	Shirkat Press, Lahore

Sales Office: 116 McLeod Road Lahore. Ph. 37357214

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands;
Curtsied when you have and kiss'd,
The wild waves whist,
Foot it featly here and there,
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.
Hark, hark!

Ariel's Song, Act I, Scene 2
The Tempest, c.1610

Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere.

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938),
The Allahabad Address, 1930

Contents

Preface
(7)

1. The Seven Stages of Potent Art
(9)

2. Twice Upon A Time
(16)

3. The Human Spirit
(22)

Notes
(25)

Preface

The world had been at war for two years when the third centenary of William Shakespeare arrived in 1916. Sir Israel Gollancz of Kings' College and Shakespeare Memorial Theatre compiled *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*. One of the entries was from Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal (later Sir), an Urdu poem comprising of fourteen lines– the same as in a Shakespearean sonnet but following a different rhyme scheme. The homage in the last couplet was rather unusual for those days:

> Nature guards its mysteries so jealously,
> It will never again create one who knows so many secrets.[1]

This may pose a problem if we know what else the poet was writing around that time. Since September that year, he was in the thick of a controversy for attacking Plato, theological mysticism and decadent literature in the first installment of a long Persian poem, *Secrets and Mysteries*.[2] Just as the *Book of Homage* first appeared in England, Iqbal was writing the second part of his long poem in Lahore. This was dedicated to 'The Muslim Nation', and he claimed in the dedicatory epistle that for quite some time he had been singing praise of no one except this true love, his nation. This was not poetic exaggeration, according to him, since in the last chapter (written about a year later) he would request the Holy Prophet to be a witness that his poetry contained nothing but the Quran. If so, then how

come he had chosen to surpass many in paying homage to Shakespeare? Why was he placing the English poet in the same category as Rumi?[3]

This is the first of the intriguing questions that arise as we approach Shakespeare from the perspective of Iqbal.

1. The Seven Stages of Potent Art

Was Shakespeare everything and nothing, or was he everything and himself? In the first case he could not have had a self, and hence unable to capture in a single instant the fullness of his entire past: his memory must have been a chaos of vague possibilities rather than a summation.[1]

On the other hand, if he had a self, then possibilities of other kinds must have been open to him, and we may know them by reflecting on the story of Prospero.

1

For Prospero, the Duke of Milan, books became what the Forbidden Tree was for Adam and Eve, and Joseph's dream for Joseph. They preoccupied him, so that in spite of immense popularity among his people he could not retain the dukedom, which was then usurped by his brother Antonio with the help of Alonso, the King of Naples. Prospero got exiled and Milan became a vassal of Naples.[2]

Thus was Milan thrust from Milan, that he may find a kingdom where he himself was lost.[3]

2

Sycorax, an old witch from Algiers, had been left by some sailors on an uninhabited island and bore a son whose personality resembled some art and literature of a few centuries later: "as disproportioned in his manners as in his shape."[4] Through her magic, the witch subdued Ariel, a free spirit, and

confined him into a cloven pine when he refused to obey her earthy and abhorred commands.

She died, leaving behind Caliban as the sole heir while Ariel groaned in pain until Prospero arrived on the scene a dozen of years later, newly banished from Milan with his three year old daughter Miranda and some of his books that had been slipped into the luggage by a kindhearted Neapolitan Gonzalo.[5]

Recruiting the elves, demi-puppets and other inward forces of Nature, and liberating Ariel by breaking the spell of Sycorax, were a sharp reproof to those degenerate days and the earliest evidence of the learning that Prospero had acquired at the cost of dukedom.[6]

3

Caliban, who was taking Prospero around the island, and in return was being looked after by him and taught language by Miranda, attempted to rape the young woman as she came of age. The father intervened and the subsequent enslavement of Caliban proved the wizard's capability in a manner that even Caliban could appreciate: "his art is of such power, it would control my dam's god Setebos."[7]

Miranda, the heroine of Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* is the gift of language and may personify his literary output– offspring of his verbal art, his "brainchildren": his plays and poetry.[8] Fortunately, Caliban is not the only suitor.

4

Ferdinand, the son of King Alonso, appears on the island when a storm at the sea is engineered by Prospero through Ariel: all travelers are saved and Ferdinand is led by the song of the elements to set eyes on Miranda.[9] She perceives him as a spirit and thinks there is no more such shapes as he while he, although he must have seen other such shapes as she, is helped by the power of love to foresee in her an ideal spouse: he proposes less

than twenty lines later ("O, if a virgin, and your affection not gone forth, I'll make you the Queen of Naples").[10]

Aside, Prospero exclaims to Ariel with unusual excitement, "Spirit, fine spirit, I'll free thee within two days for this." In front of him are not further proofs of his art but its very principles laid bare: channelling free will through systematic arrangement of circumstances is like rethinking the thought of Divine Creation.[11]

5

Sebastian, the brother of King Alonso, is tempted by Antonio to assassinate the monarch, since the entire entourage except Sebastian and Antonio has fallen asleep at an odd hour. The plot is thwarted when Gonzalo is woken up by Ariel, who had earlier induced the untimely sleep on instructions from his master Prospero.

Preventing the original sin, while the good Neapolitan Gonzalo stands proxy for the wizard: here is a psychological reality to hold, as it were, the mirror up to the social reconstruction dreamed by Gonzalo just before going to sleep: *"I' the commonwealth I would by contraries execute all things... All things in common nature should produce without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony, sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine would I not have...I would with such perfection govern, sir, t' excel the Golden Age."*[12]

6

Caliban inspires Stephano, the drunken butler of the King, to assassinate Prospero, become the "king" of the island, force Miranda to become his queen and appoint Caliban and Trinculo as "viceroys". This is prevented when Prospero and Ariel set their spirits, in the form of dogs and hounds, on the conspirators.[13]

Caliban's true nature is now revealed (as long as we can read and eyes can see) but unlike other such incidents, this one

wasn't initiated by Prospero. Destiny had intervened, like at the time of the initial banishment (which Miranda does not remember: "Never till this day saw I him touch'd with anger so distemper'd").[14]

7

Ariel and spirits have appeared in front of King Alonso and his companions, declared themselves to be "ministers of Fate" and reminded the guilty of their sins.[15]

The conscience of Alonso is woken up: Ferdinand shall marry Miranda, through whom Prospero's descendants shall rule over Naples, which thus inherits Milan lawfully and Antonio is left without any such legacy. Everybody shall go home, Prospero break his staff and burn his books, and Ariel returns to the elements now.[16] *That is almost the end, but not quite so.*

8

In the epilogue, Prospero appears and informs you that his project was to please, i.e., to please *you*.[17]

Take him literally, and it gives you an eighth conflict because then you become what Prospero was at the time of being banished from Milan, the play you saw just now becoming to you what books were to him: a preoccupation due to which Antonio, your reason, will banish you from the real world and send you to the island, your imagination– reason cannot believe that reality and imagination could be held together, and even King Alonso (whichever part of you he represents) is going to cooperate since he is yet to know better.

This eighth conflict, your banishment, is in fact the first in a second cycle of the same seven sequences, but now you are the protagonist.[18]

9

When Ferdinand arrived on the enchanted island, he was welcomed by Ariel's Song:

> Come unto these yellow sands,
> And then take hands;
> Curtsied when you have and kiss'd,
> The wild waves whist,
> Foot it featly here and there,
> And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.
> Hark, hark!

Ariel was groaning from inside a cloven pine when Prospero first set foot on the yellow sands but the soul of Prospero may have sensed the unheard melody even then (this conflict and the previous one do not occur on the stage but in his soul of the protagonist since they are outside the memory of Miranda, the protagonist's craft, which is still at an early stage of development).[19]

Beginning with the third, the message of each conflict has become a character in the play and its refutation another:

1. MIRANDA'S COMING OF AGE: MIRANDA VS. CALIBAN Her very nature embodies what the dispute with Caliban is all about: the possibility of transcending the effect of the past and the boundaries of a secluded island, and witnessing "brave new world." Caliban is the absence of this possibility.

2. FERDINAND'S COURTSHIP: ARIEL VS. STEPHANO. Ferdinand accepts toil so that he may win the hand of Miranda and he holds back physical desire: exactly what Ariel is all about in many ways.[20] Stephano embodies the opposite, playing false god, getting his feet licked by someone else's slave, putting on stolen costumes and wanting to make Miranda his "queen" by force.[21]

3. GONZALO'S AWAKENING: GONZALO VS. TRINCULO. Gonzalo's awakening summarizes the action of the play by preventing the evil designs of the King's brother and also shows what the play can do for the audience: wake them up. Trinculo, since his "self" is dead due to excessive scepticism (*"any strange beast there makes a man"*), can neither be awakened nor drawn to action– *Dost thou like the plot, Trinculo?*[22]

4. STEPHANO'S PLOT: FERDINAND VS. SEBASTIAN. In preventing Stephano's plot, Prospero and Ariel are in a way acting on behalf of Ferdinand, who, as Miranda's suitor, would be defending her and her old father if he knew about the conspiracy. The intentions of the three conspirators to usurp the island through treason and assassination are mirrored in Sebastian, who is the direct foe of Ferdinand in attempting to usurp his legacy.

5. THE BREAKING OF THE STAFF: PROSPERO VS. ANTONIO. Miranda, Ariel, Gonzalo and Ferdinand are points on a continuum ending on Prospero: in the process of becoming Prospero, one passes through the stage of being each of these. Hence Miranda playing chess in Prospero's cell has already become a reflection of what Ariel is, and she evolves into a second Gonzalo soon afterwards by exclaiming her joy over "brave new world". By marrying Ferdinand, she will become him and then leave home to rule elsewhere: like father, like daughter. Since Prospero has burnt his books and broken the staff, his potent art will not pass

on to Miranda. Instead, she will be learning its principles by comparing her world with the memories of what she saw on the island (just as you are doing right now). Caliban, Stephano, Trinculo, Sebastian and Antonio are five levels in the denial of that which is necessary for this journey.[23]

2. Twice Upon A Time

Seven princesses, one from every realm of the inhabited world, had been preordained for Behram V of Persia. He built a dome of different colour for each beauty, visited one on each night of the week and listened to a story by her. He repeated the cycle many times.

This is how the Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi (c.1141-c.1209) turned history into legend in his long poem *Haft Payker*, or *Seven Beauties*, in the late twelfth century.[1]

"That which is new and old at the same time is language, and now I use language to show this," said Nezami in the preface. "The Divine command on the Day of Creation did not produce anything more charming than language. Do not consider those who have this gift, ever to be dead: they are like fish, having lowered themselves just beneath the surface of speech: they shall reappear sooner than you utter their names... Language, if its soul is untainted, is the keeper of the treasury of the unseen: it knows the story that has not been heard and reads the book that has not been written."[2]

1

The following is a synopsis of the seven stories narrated by the princesses, and you may observe that the stories comprise of essentially the same conflicts, feature the same roles and were narrated in the same order as the seven major conflicts in *The Tempest* in their chronological order four centuries later. *Language... knows the story that has*

not been heard and reads the book that has not been written.

1. THE BLACK DOME (*the exile of Prospero*). A king leaves his kingdom out of curiosity about a black dress worn by someone, and arrives in a city where everyone wears black but nobody explains why. He has to find out by himself: thrown into a magical realm where he is led on by a beautiful maiden without being allowed to consummate his desire and then thrown out forever when he is beyond himself. He starts wearing black too.

2. THE YELLOW DOME (*the liberation of Ariel*). True love between a king and a slave girl is challenged by their inherent insecurities that are fuelled by a foolish old maid until love conquers all.

3. THE GREEN DOME (*Miranda's coming of age*). Bashr, literally meaning "the human being" in Persian, takes fancy on a fair woman but then meets a beastly character whose animal instincts cannot be tamed before they lead him to a pathetic death. The despicable character leaves behind a beautiful widow, who turns out to be none other than the woman sought by Bashr. She is herself too happy to get rid of the beast.

4. THE RED DOME (*Ferdinand's courtship*). A chivalrous young man wins the hand of a princess after going through a series of tests that involve moral as well as physical strength.

5. THE BLUE DOME (*Gonzalo's awakening*). A traveller is caught in a labyrinth of frightening situations, only to realize that they are

happening in his imagination and he needs to "wake up."

6. THE SANDAL-COLOURED DOME (*Stephano's plot*). A character called "Bad" usurps the ration of his fellow-traveller "Good" and attempts to murder him, only to be chased and executed by the barbaric father-in-law of "Good."

7. THE WHITE DOME (*the breaking of the staff*). A young man enters his own garden through the backdoor, finds unknown women feasting there and takes one of them to a secret chamber. When asked who she is, she whispers, "Fate." The chamber falls apart and other accidents prevent the man whenever he tries to consummate his desire until he realizes that he must marry the woman first.[3]

2

"It's a locked up case of pearls, and I have hidden the key in the text," Nezami says about his book in the epilogue. "The pearl glides on a string to which the loosening of knots is the key. All that is good or bad in its verses is invariably an allusion or a hint for Reason. Each separate story has become a house of treasures." Then he reminds the king who was his patron:

> May I submit with due humility, if it does not offend: though your banquets are gorgeous, the banquet that lasts forever is this one. Of all things that have been called gems and treasures, this brings ease whereas those others give nothing but pain. Even if they should last five hundred years– may you live long– they shall decay, whereas this

> treasure as a special court shall be with you till the end of Time.

Nor marble nor the gilded monuments of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme, but you shall shine more bright in these contents than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.[4]

3

The Seven Beauties is the fourth masnavi (long poem with rhymed couplets) in a set of five written by Nezami, collectively called *Khamseh,* or the Quintet:

1. *The Treasure of Mysteries* (Makhzanul Asrar)
2. *Khusro and Shireen* (Khusraw-o-Shireen)
3. *Layla and Majnun* (Laylee-o-Majnun)
4. *Seven Beauties* (Haft Paykar)
5. *The Epic of Alexander* (Iskandernameh)

In *The Tempest,* the latter five conflicts are personified by characters of the play. In the *Seven Beauties,* each of the latter five stories corresponds to one of the five masnavis (and therefore every character of *The Tempest* which personifies the essence of a story from the *Seven Beauties* also represents the corresponding masnavi of the *Khamseh*):

1. MIRANDA: *The Treasure of Mysteries (*Makhzanul Asrar*), the first masnavi.* This long poem is a list of insights about which the poet says in the prelude, "the substance of spiritual excellence as well as kingship is contained here." This common substance of spiritual excellence and kingship is personified by the heroine of the third story in the *Seven Beauties* (told inside the green dome) and by Miranda in *The Tempest.*

2. ARIEL: *Khusro and Shireen* (Khusro-o-Shireen), *the second masnavi.* Shireen is an Armenian princess contested between Khusro, the emperor of Persia, and the sculptor Farhad, who commits suicide when the emperor sends him false news about the death of the princess. Sometime after his marriage to Shireen, the emperor shows disrespect to the ambassador of Prophet Muhammad despite knowing from family tradition as well as a dream that collaboration with this last prophet would be the secret power of all kingdoms. He is assassinated and the usurper wants to marry Shireen, who kills herself with a dagger during a nightly vigil on her late husband's tomb. Shireen, sought by so many suitors, is like the princess in the fourth story of the *Seven Beauties* (told inside the red dome), except that her suitors are unworthy since they are yet to grasp the secret principles of power, personified by Ariel in *The Tempest*.

3. GONZALO: *Layla Majnun, the third masnavi.* When the young Arab noble Qais is denied marriage to his beloved Layla, he takes to the wilderness. There he connects with Nature, befriends all creatures and people nickname him "Majnun" or madman: here we have an Arabian precursor of the Neapolitan Gonzalo. When the two lovers die, a tombstone is put on their graves to say that the sleepers will "awake" on the Judgment Day to be united forever– just as the protagonist of the fifth story in the *Seven Beauties* (told inside the blue dome) needs to be woken up.

4. FERDINAND: *Seven Beauties* (Haftpaykar), *the fourth masnavi.* While Behram was sitting inside the domes and listening to stories from beautiful women, his vizier was tyrannizing the country, as Behram learnt later through "seven petitioners" (matching the seven stories). This is epitomized in the sixth story itself (told inside the sandal-coloured dome) where Bad steals the baggage of the Good and tries to hurt him. Ferdinand in *The Tempest* is quite reminiscent of Behram as he watches a masque presented by spirits and plays chess with Miranda inside a cell, just as Behram listens to stories inside the dome. As Behram eventually learns about the misdeeds of the vizier, so Ferdinand has to learn about the misdeeds of his father, the king.

5. PROSPERO: *The Epic of Alexander* (Iskander Nameh), *the fifth masnavi.* Alexander of Macedon, by his Persian name Iskander, is merged with the Quranic figure of Zulqarnayn, a king whom God granted dominion over the inward and outward forces of the world. "Iskander Zulqarnayn" sets out in search of the Water of Life so that he may live forever but only Khizr, a guide, makes it to the fountain and destiny assigns him the task of guiding the lost travellers till the end of time. In the *Seven Beauties,* the last story (told inside the white dome) emphasizes the necessity of accepting the natural order of things. In *The Tempest,* Prospero must break his staff and burn his books, just as Alexander must accept that his kingdom cannot last forever. In the epilogue, Prospero reappears rather like Khizr.

3. The Human Spirit

"When you see two of them meet together as friends, they are one, and at the same time six hundred thousand," Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-73) wrote about true mentors, some eighty years after Nezami. "Their numbers are in the likeness of waves: the wind will have brought them into number. The Sun, which is the spirits, became separated in the windows, which are bodies. When you gaze on the Sun's disk, it is itself one, but the one who is screened by the bodies is in some doubt. Separation is in the animal spirit, the human spirit is one essence."[1] Can we say this about Nezami and Shakespeare, and perhaps also about Rumi, Goethe and Iqbal?

The following note appeared in a Sufi magazine published in Urdu from Meeruth, a city in India, on August 1, 1913:[2]

> Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal dreamed that Rumi was commanding him to write a *masnavi.* Iqbal replied, "That genre reached its perfection with you." Rumi said, "No, you should also write." Iqbal stated respectfully, "You command that the self must be extinguished but I reckon the self to be something that should be sustained." Rumi replied, "My intended meaning is also the same as what you have understood."
>
> He [Iqbal] found himself reciting the following verses as he woke up, and then he began to write them down…

Those verses were in Persian, which was the language of Rumi, but the title of Iqbal's book alluded to Nezami, who had called his first work *The Treasury of Secrets.* Iqbal named the first part of his masnavi 'The Secrets of the Self' and the masnavi itself *Secrets and Mysteries.*

In the preface, Iqbal repeated claims that were the trade mark of Nezami, such as that his work contained means for spiritual excellence as well as worldly power and that many poets were born after they died, coming back like roses growing from the dust of their tombs (Nezami had compared such poets with fish under water, raising their heads when their names were called). In the works of Iqbal, several characters from Nezami were going to reappear in modern settings– Khizr, Layla, Qais, Pervez and Farhad, among others. Just as Nezami had employed the name of his son, Muhammad bin Ilyas, to represent posterity, so Iqbal was going to address the coming generations through his son (and may have had this end in mind even as he named the child in real life: Javid literally meant "the eternal" or even "eternity," the subject of Nezami's last epic).

The poem about Shakespeare, which Iqbal sent for inclusion in *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare,* is found as an unfinished draft in a notebook used by the poet around this time.[3] The finished version does not exist in facsimile. The poem may have been completed just shortly before being sent to Sir Israel Golancz in 1915 or 1916, and written on a paper that did not come back either from the scribe who scribed it for being sent to England or from the friend who translated it. In any case, Iqbal had been "visited" by Rumi in his dream by the time he sent the poem to Sir Israel.

The original in Urdu, since it has fourteen lines, obviously divides itself into seven couplets (four in the first stanza and three in the second). If translated faithfully, they

trace the development of Prospero's art (and Shakespeare's) through the same major conflicts that appear in the chronological storyline of *The Tempest,* the relationship becoming increasingly visible as the poem progresses.[4]

Shakespeare

1. THE EXILE OF PROSPERO
   The river's flow mirrors the red glow of dawn,
   The quiet of the evening mirrors the evening's song;[5]

2. THE LIBERATION OF ARIEL
   The rose- leaf mirrors spring's beautiful cheek;
   The chamber of the cup mirrors the coquettish wine;[6]

3. MIRANDA'S COMING OF AGE
   Beauty mirrors Truth, the heart mirrors Beauty;
   The beauty of your speech mirrors the human heart.[7]

4. FERDINAND'S COURTSHIP
   Life finds perfection in your sky- soaring thought:
   Was your luminous nature the goal of Life?[8]

5. GONZALO'S AWAKENING
   When the eye looked around to see you,
   It saw the sun hidden in its own radiance.[9]

6. STEPHANO'S PLOT
   You were hidden from the eyes of the world,
   But with your own eyes you saw the world exposed
   and bare.[10]

7. THE BREAKING OF THE STAFF
   Nature guards its mysteries so jealously,
   It will never again create one who knows so many
   secrets.[11]

Notes

Notes are elaborate. Readers may find it more helpful to first read the text disregarding the notes and then revisit.

Preface

1 *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* compiled by Sir Israel Golancz is a collector's item. I was able to take notes from a copy made available to me by Iqbal Academy Pakistan. Iqbal's Urdu poem appears in calligraphy along with a lose translation by the poet's friend Sardar Jogundra Singh on the facing page, 323:

To Shakespeare
A Tribute from the East

I

The river's silent flow
Mirrors the glory of the rosy dawn;
The sunset-silence in the golden glow
Mirrors the message of the evening song;
The burgeoning leaf, after winter's sleep,
Mirrors the rosy rapture of spring;
The bridal-palanquin of crystal cup
Reflects the virgin beauty of red wine;
The rivers of endless Beauty
Mirror the myriad coloured light of Truth;
The great deeps of human heart
Mirror the radiance from Beauty's Realm;
And thy enchanted verse in liquid notes
Mirrors the great deep of human heart!

II

Under the flashing sunbeams of thy thought,
Nature herself has found herself revealed
In perfect glory in thy golden song;
The conscious mistress of her treasured wealth!
The eager eye in search of thy image
Found thee enshrined within a veil of light,
Like mighty monarch of night and day,
That bathed in glory, seeing is not seen.
Hid from the world's eye thou hast beheld
The intricate workings of her inmost soul!
The jealous mistress of deep mysteries
Never again will suffer herself to bear
A seer like thee who took her by surprise,
Unveiled in starlight and mellow moon.

[2] In the first edition, Iqbal named Hafiz as a representative of the literature of death but modified this opinion in subsequent editions, apparently benefiting from reader feedback. The first part, 'Asrar-i-Khudi,' was first published in 1915 and revised in 1918. The second part, 'Rumooz-i-Bekhudi' (Mysteries of Selflessness) was first published in 1918. The standard edition, published around 1922, combined both as *Asrar-o-Rumooz* (Secrets and Mysteries). The first part was translated into English by R.A. Nicholson in 1920 and the second by A.J. Arberry in 1953, apart from other later translations.

[3] In 1910, Iqbal jotted down the key points of his system of thought in a private notebook titled *Stray Reflections* (edited and published by the poet's son Dr. Javid Iqbal in 1962, and revised and annotated by me in 2006). The following entries shed some light on how he viewed Shakespeare as well as Goethe:

- Our soul discovers itself when we come into contact with a great mind. It is not until I had

realised the infinitude of Goethe's mind that I discovered the narrow breadth of my own.

- To explain the deepest truths of life in the form of homely parables requires extraordinary genius. Shakespeare, Maulana Rum (Jalaluddin) and Jesus Christ are probably the only illustrations of this rare type of genius.
- Both Shakespeare and Goethe rethink the thought of Divine Creation. There is, however, one important difference between them. The realist Englishmen rethinks the individual; the idealist German, the universal. Faust is a seeming individual only. In reality, he is humanity individualised.

1. The Seven Stages of Potent Art

[1] The allusion is to 'Everything and Nothing' (1958) by the Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) and inferences have been checked against 'Shakespeare's Memory,' the last short story by the same author: "No one may capture in a single instant the fullness of his entire past… A man's memory is not a summation; it is a chaos of vague possibilities."

[2] In Pakistan, the fall of Prospero could be conspicuously reminiscent of the way political power slipped away from the hand of Muslim rulers, including the later Mughals, as they busied themselves with literary pursuits while usurpers wove webs of treason around them: the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, exiled by the British, was an accomplished poet. Just as some of those very same books helped Prospero regain power, literature also became the most potent art through which the Indian Muslim community finally succeeded in establishing an independent state: Pakistan was the brainchild of the poet, Iqbal. The

declaration by the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah (1876-1948) on the eve of establishing an Islamic republic, "...Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims..." was just as dramatic as Prospero discarding his former practices once his dukedom was restored.

[3] Allusion is to lines spoken by Gonzalo in Act V, Scene 1 (but reference to Ferdinand has been modified to suite the present context). There is a similarity between the banishment of Prospero and Shakespeare's appearance on the London stage in the 1580s. Whether the young Shakespeare ran away from Stratford because he had killed a deer in the privileged grounds that probably never existed, or whether he just got attracted to diction, music and embellishment, English theatre in those days was a place of notoriety at worst and uncharted territory at best.

[4] While quoting verses in paragraphs, I have usually ignored line divisions. This quotation is from Prospero's famous comment about Caliban in Act V, Scene 1, Lines 294-5.

It is generally believed that the role of Caliban was originally played by comic actors. Its identification with the natives of the colonized lands, at least in terms of casting, might be a later development (it became customary in the middle of the eighteenth century to assign the role to black actors). In the "post-colonial" era it has become usual for critics from outside the West to identify with Caliban (some good references may be found in *Caliban* by Harold Bloom, ed., in the Major Literary Character series published by Chelsea House Publishers in 1992). The present book presents an alternate.

[5] Not very unlike how Iqbal describes democracy, the political "spirit" of Islam, "groaning under the most atrocious forms of despotism" in Asia until rescued by the British (though, of course, not without ulterior motives of their own):

Democracy, then, is the most important aspect of Islam regarded as a political ideal. It must however be confessed that the Muslims, with their ideal of individual freedom, could do nothing for the political improvement of Asia... It was, however, reserved for a Western nation politically to vitalize the countries of Asia. Democracy has been the great mission of England in modern times and English statesmen have boldly carried this principle to countries which have been, for centuries, groaning under the most atrocious forms of despotism. The British Empire is a vast political organism, the vitality of which consists in the gradual working out of this principle... England, in fact, is doing one of our own great duties, which unfavorable circumstances did not permit us to perform. It is not the number of Mohammedans which it protects, but the spirit of the British Empire that makes it the greatest Mohammedan Empire in the world ('Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal* by Latif Ahmad Shirani, ed., p.115).

In his private notebook, *Stray Reflections,* Iqbal scribbled:

A disinterested foreign rule is an impossibility. Yet the tutelage of nations is a necessity. The fee paid for this tuition is sometimes a nation's daily bread... (*Stray Reflections* by Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, edited by Dr. Javid Iqbal in 1962/2006, p.51)

6 Allusion is to the well-known comment, apparently about Shakespeare, by Thomas Nash in *Pierce Penilss His Supplication to the Devil* (1592), ending with the rhetorical question: "What can be a sharper reproofe to these degenerate effeminate dayes of ours?"

The comment is frequently quoted: for instance, *Shakespeare* by Peter Alexander, published by Oxford

University Press (1964), p.173 (At least to some of the earliest audience of *The Tempest*, Prospero's assertion, "Graves at my command/ Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth,/ By my so potent art" (Act V, Scene 1) must have reminded phrases from that early comment of Nash about "our forefathers... themselves raised from the Grave of Oblivion, and brought to plead their aged Honours in open presence").

Hence, an early sign of Shakespeare's greatness was to raise on the London stage the valiant ancestors of his nation from the grave of oblivion and bring them to plead their aged honours in open presence. This also finds a parallel in Prospero's arrival on the enchanted island. Consider Alexander's observation about Shakespeare's history plays, most of which were written in the earlier days:

> From *King John* to *Henry VIII* Shakespeare is dealing with events that his audience could well understand *as creating the world in which they were living* (Alexander, p.164; italics are mine).

[7] Lines 375-6 from Act I, Scene 2, which inspired 'Caliban on Setebos' (1864), a poem by Robert Browning (1812-89) that may help us understand Iqbal's observation:

> The result of all philosophical thought is that absolute knowledge is an impossibility. The poet Browning turns this impossibility to ethical use by a very ingenious argument. The uncertainty of human knowledge, says the poet, is a necessary condition of moral growth; since complete knowledge will destroy the liberty of human choice. (See *Stray Reflections*, p.142).

[8] This was aptly pointed out by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) in a lecture: "I have often thought of Shakespeare as the mighty wizard himself introducing as the first and fairest pledge of his so potent art, the female

character in all its charm." His definition of the female character's charm in *Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher,* anticipated Iqbal's views of the same. Coleridge stated:

> Shakespeare saw that the want of prominence, which Pope notices for sarcasm, was the blessed beauty of the woman's character, and knew that it arose not from any deficiency, but from the more exquisite harmony of all the parts of the moral being constituting one living total of head and heart.

Iqbal wrote in his private notebook:

> A woman of superb beauty with a complete absence of self-consciousness is to me the most charming thing on God's earth. (See *Stray Reflections,* p.116).

Especially in the moment of her first meeting with Ferdinand, Miranda also matches, perfectly, this entry in Iqbal's notebook and, just as in Coleridge's lecture, the works of Iqbal allow us to identify this "most charming thing on God's earth" with poetry itself. Just as Ferdinand is first amazed by the melody of Ariel and then bewildered by the appearance of Miranda, and the two experiences become somehow interconnected in his mind, so in *Javidnama* (an epic poem by Iqbal in Persian, depicting a celestial journey in which Rumi is his guide), the melody of Sarosh, the primordial muse of Persian literature, is reminiscent of Ariel while the "silver form" of Sarosh itself and its recitation of poetry is not very unlike Miranda appearing before Ferdinand. Keeping in mind that Caliban also composes lyrics *('Ban, 'Bban ca—Caliban*), the comments which Rumi makes about poets of darkness after listening to Sarosh can easily describe Caliban:

> Many a poet through the magic of his art
> is a highwayman of hearts, a devil of the glance…
> His words are a sparrow's chirp, no ardour or anguish;

the people of passion call him a corpse, not a man.
Sweeter than that sweet chant which knows no mode
are the words which you utter in a dream.

(Translation from A.J. Arberry)

On the same note, 'Indian Artists', an Urdu poem in *Zarb-i-Kaleem* (The Rod of Moses; 1936), reads like a reflection on Caliban (especially if we also keep in mind 'Caliban on Setebos' by Robert Browning, with which Iqbal must have been familiar). The following is a translation of Iqbal's poem:

Their imagination is the funeral of love and ecstasy,
Their thought the burial ground of nations.
Images of death in their idol houses,
The craft of these Brahmins fed up of life.
They conceal the higher stations from common view:
They put the spirit to slumber and awaken the body.
The poets, painters and fiction writers of India,
Alas! They are obsessed by woman.

[9] The tense has been changed from past to present from this section onward, since this is where the action of the play starts (previous incidents are only narrated in *The Tempest* by characters).

[10] Act I, Scene 2, Lines 451-3. Compare with the entry from Iqbal's private notebook on "A woman of superb beauty with a complete absence of self-consciousness" quoted earlier.

[11] Consider Iqbal's observation:

> Both Shakespeare and Goethe rethink the thought of Divine Creation. There is, however, one important difference between them. The realist Englishman rethinks the individual; the idealist German, the universal. Faust is a seeming individual only. In reality, he is humanity individualised. (See *Stray Reflections*, p.130).

Agha Hashr Kashmiri, the great Urdu playwright usually known as "the Indian Shakespeare" (and a close friend of Iqbal), illustrated this concept in *Balwamangal* where Krishna explains to his disciple Shankar how incidents create a certain effect when arranged in a certain manner. The first two scenes were apparently inspired from the 'Prologue in Heaven' in Goethe's *Faust* but the conflict was altered. Instead of Mephistophilis laying wager against God on destroying the soul of the protagonist as in Goethe's play, the legendary Hindu mystic Shankar (later depicted in Iqbal's poetry as a counterpart of Mansur Hallaj) claims that he may save the soul of humanity while Krishna names a certain sinner as test case.

12 Act II, Scene 1, Lines 150-179. Iqbal noted in his private notebook, *Strat Reflections,* in 1910 (p.92):

> Given character and healthy imagination, it is possible to reconstruct this world of sin and misery into a veritable paradise.

Gonzalo's vision is echoed, consciously or unconsciously, in the imagined world of Marghadin on planet Mars in the fourth chapter of *Javidnama* (1932) by Iqbal. The following translation is from A.J. Arberry:

> Marghadin and those lofty edifices—
> what can I say of that noble city?
> Its inhabitants sweet of speech as honey,
> comely their faces, gentle their manners, simple their apparel,
> their thoughts innocent of the burning fever of gain,
> they were intimate with the secrets of the sun's alchemy;
> who so of them desires silver or gold gathers it from light,
> even as we gather salt from the briny sea.
> The aim of science and art there is service,
> no one weighs work done against gold;
> no one is even acquainted with dinars and dirhams,

these idols may not enter the sanctuary.
The demon of the machine has no power over nature,
the skies are not blackened by smoke;
the lamp of the hard-toiling farmer is always bright,
he is secure from the plundering of the landlords,
his tillage is not a struggle for water,
his harvest is his own, no other shares in it.
In that world there are no armies, no squadrons,
none gains his livelihood by killing and murder;
In Marghadin no pen wins luster
from inscribing and disseminating lies;
in the market-places there is no clamour of the workless,
no whining of beggars afflicts the ear.

The Martian Sage

No one here is a mendicant or destitute,
slave and master, ruler and ruled, here are none.

[13] This can be reminiscent in some ways (though not all) of some parables in the *Masnavi* of Rumi on warnings about being careful in approaching the "friends of God," especially the story of the fool who entreated Jesus to bring some bones to life in *Masnavi,* Volume 2 (Lines 141-502). In the parable, a foolish person accompanying Jesus on a journey sees some bones and wishes to learn the exalted Name by which Jesus brings dead to life. When he is told that he is asking more than what he would be able to hold, he entreats Jesus to pronounce the Name himself. Jesus cries, "O Lord, how has this sick man no care for himself...? He has left his own corpse and seeks to mend the dead bones of a stranger." God answers, "The backslider seeks backsliding. He himself has sown the thistle that has grown in his soul." ("A devil, a born devil, on whose nature/ Nurture can never stick," as Prospero observes about Caliban, Act IV, Scene 1, Lines 188-9). Jesus pronounces the Name, the bones take back the form which they had possessed in life, and a black lion now springs forth and kills the foolish person. When asked by Jesus, the lion

says that he killed the man because he had troubled Jesus but didn't drink his blood because it had not been granted to him in the Divine dispensation.

"Oh, many a one that like that raging lion has departed from the world without having eaten his prey!" Rumi goes on to comment. "His ordained portion is not a straw, while his greed is as a mountain. He has no means, though he has gotten the means." Hence the black lion that sprang up was a reflection of the person's self, which Jesus had already described to be as dead as the bones of the lion (*"Enter divers spirits, in shape of dogs and hounds, hunting them, Prospero and Ariel setting them on,"* according to stage direction after Line 256 in Act IV, Scene 1).

[14] Lines 144-5, Act IV, Scene 1.

[15] "I and my fellows/ Are ministers of Fate..." Lines 60-61, Act 3, Scene 3.

[16] Several aspects of Prospero's breaking of the staff are reflected in the fifth segment of Iqbal's poem 'The Conquest of Nature' in *Payam-i-Mashriq* (The Message of the East; in Persian, 1923). The segment is subtitled 'The Morn of Resurrection (Adam in the Presence of God)', and Adam is shown as addressing the Creator on the Day of Judgment:

> You, whose sun gives the star of life its splendour,
> With my heart you lit the candle of the sightless world!
> My skills have poured an ocean into a strait,
> My pickaxe makes milk flow from the heart of stone.
> Venus is my captive, the moon worships me;
> My reason, which does great deeds, subdues and controls
> the universe.
> I have gone down into the earth, and been up into the
> heavens,
> Both the atom and the radiant sun are under the spell of my
> magic.
> Although his sorcery took me away from the right path,

Excuse my fault, forgive my sin:
If his sorcery had not taken me in, the world could not have been subdued.
Without the halter of humility, pride could not be taken prisoner.
To melt this stone statue with my hot sighs,
I had to don his *zunnar*.
Reason catches artful nature in a net
And thus Ahriman, born of fire, bows down before the creature of dust!
(Slightly modified from translation by Mustansir Mir in *Tulip in the Desert*)

[17] Epilogue (spoken by Prospero), Lines 11-13

Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please.

[18] Compare the diverse implications of "everything and nothing" versus "everything and oneself" (contrasted in the first paragraph of this chapter).

Modern criticism has gone far astray from Samuel Taylor Coleridge who made this point about *The Tempest* when he said that this was a play:

> in which the interest is not historical, or dependent upon fidelity of portraiture, or the natural connection of events, but is a birth of the imagination, and rests only upon the coaptation and union of the elements granted to, or assumed by, the poet. It is a species of drama which owes no allegiance to time or space, and in which, therefore, errors of chronology and geography– no mortal sins in any species– are venial faults, and count for nothing. It addresses itself entirely to the imaginative faculty; and although the illusion may be assisted by the effect on the senses of the complicated scenery and decorations of modern times,

> yet this sort of assistance is dangerous. For the principal and only genuine excitement ought to come from within– from the moved and sympathetic imagination; whereas, where so much is addressed to the mere external senses of seeing and bearing, the spiritual vision is apt to languish, and the attraction from without will withdraw the mind from the proper and only legitimate interest which is intended to spring from within.

While comparison between Prospero and the playwright has been done to death, why is it rare these days to hear a reflection on "the reader as themselves," which is the other side of the same coin? In the light of Iqbal's interpretation of Nietzsche, this could be due to the impact of the German thinker (even on those who may not be aware of his influence on them): the philosophy of Nietzsche ultimately rests on a bleak self-negation hidden beneath the surface of monstrous egoism, exactly the opposite of Mawlana Rumi where affirmation of the self comes out of apparent selflessness (From this perspective, a dramatic enactment of Nietzsche's concept of arriving at the Superman cannot get better than the bond between Caliban and Stephano (*"Has a new master– Get a new man"*), although some modern viewers identifying themselves with Caliban or Stephano may not admit that they are implicitly giving in to a Nietzschean paradigm). In notes dictated to a follower in 1937, Iqbal observed:

> According to Nietzsche the 'I' is a fiction... The conception of the superman in Nietzsche is purely materialistic... It is probably that Nietzsche borrowed it from the literature of Islam or the East and degraded it by his materialism." (See *Discourses of Iqbal* by Shahid Husain Razzaqi, ed., published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan in 1979, reprinted 2003, pp.108-109).

Iqbal's philosophy perceives personality to be the central fact of the universe and in the constitution of human being, who is a smaller or dependent 'I am' as compared to the ultimate 'I am' i.e. God.

19 Relationships between Prospero and Miranda, action and characters, the playwright and his art, and the viewers and their perceptions, can be informed by how Iqbal explained his theory of "self" in the light of relativity:

> The ease with which we perceive external things hides from us the mystery of human perception. According to modern science all that is necessary for an act of perception happens inside the observer; yet the thing perceived appears outside, and even at an enormous distance from the observer, as in the case of a star. If the star is mere interpretation of happenings within, then, why does it look external? You may say that it looks external because it is external. I do not contend this point. The star may be a reality situated outside me in an absolute space. My point is that if the account of perception given by modern science is correct, the star ought not to look external. But is the thing known independent of the act of knowledge? Or, is the act of knowledge a constitutive element in the making of the object?
>
> (See *Discourses of Iqbal,* Shahid Husain Razzaqi, ed., p.189).

20 Ariel was liberated by the power of a potent art but the liberation was conditional: by showing aggression to the present master he would be negating the principle which brought the first liberation. He must nurture his freedom rather than being hasty, and his song in the first act ("Come unto these yellow sands...") suggests this perception of freedom as union with elements.

[21] In the *Masnavi*, Rumi describes the Pharaoh by the simile of a jackal that fell into a painter's pot, became multicoloured and claimed to be peacock. In *The Tempest*, Stephano plays false god like Pharaoh and puts on costumes from Prospero's trumpery, just like the jackal in Rumi's parable.

[22] Italicised phrases are references, respectively, to lines spoken by Trinculo in his introductory speech in Act 2, Scene 2, and by Stephano in Act 3, Scene 2, line 107. Often overshadowed by more robust rascals, Trinculo is nevertheless a peculiar personality (consider his introductory speech). His seems to be the type of mentality described by Iqbal in the preface to *Payam-i-Mashriq* (A Message from the East; 1923):

> Regarded from a purely literary standpoint, the debilitation of the forces of life in Europe after the ordeal of the war [WWI] is unfavourable to the development of a correct and mature literary ideal. Indeed, the fear is that the minds of the nations may be gripped by *that slow-pulsed magianism which runs away from life's difficulties, and which fails to distinguish between the emotions of the heart and the thoughts of the* brain. (Translation is from M. Hadi Husain, with a slight modification, and italics are mine).

This "slow-pulsed magianism" was not without well-known precedents in European literature: Voltaire's perception of Shakespeare was a fine example, at least according to Elizabeth Montagu, an early bluestocking whose comment in 1769 anticipated Iqbal's perception of slow-pulsed magianism despite the aristocratic bias of her approach which Iqbal did not share. Her comment on Voltaire was:

> a French wit, who seems to think he has made prodigious concessions to our prejudices in favour of the works of our countryman in allowing the credit of a few splendid passages, while he speaks of every

entire piece as a monstrous and ill-constructed farce... Superfluous criticisms hit the level of shallow minds, to whom a bon mot will ever appear reason, and an epigrammatic turn argument... (See *Four Centuries of Shakespearean Criticism* by Frank Kermode, ed., Discuss Books/Published by Avon, 1965, p.106).

[23] These nine conflicts may serve as parables for answering, in the same order, the nine questions listed by Iqbal in 'The New Garden of Mystery' in *Zabur-i-Ajam* (Persian Psalms; in Persian), published in 1927. The following is translation (references to the corresponding conflicts have been added in parenthesis).

Question 1 (The fall of Prospero)

First of all I am intrigued about my thought: why is it sometimes needed, sometimes shunned?

Question 2 (The liberation of Ariel)

What is this ocean whose shore is knowledge? What is that pearl which is found in its depth?

Question 3 (Miranda's coming of age)

What is the union of the contingent and the necessary? What are near and far, more and less?

Question 4 (Ferdinand's courtship)

How did the eternal and temporal separate so that one became the world and the other, God? If the knower and known are the one pure essence, what are the aspirations of this handful of earth?

Question 5 (Gonzalo's awakening)

What am I? Tell me what 'I' means. What is the meaning of 'travel into yourself'?

Question 6 (Stephano's plot)

What is that part which is greater than its whole? What is the way to find that part?

Question 7 (The breaking of the staff)

Of what sort is this traveler who is the wayfarer? Of whom shall I say that this is a Perfect Human Being?

Question 8 (You are the protagonist)

What point does the claim, 'I am the Creative Truth' imply? Do you think that this mystery was mere nonsense?

Question 9 (Recognize you power)

Who was it that at last became familiar with the secret of Oneness? Who is the wise one that is a knower of mysteries?

2: Twice Upon A Time

[1] For the original Persian text of the *Khamseh* of Nezami Ganjavi, I have consulted the edition published by Amir Kabir Publications, Tehran. Translation is partially my own and in parts indebted to C.E. Wilson (1924): *The Haft Paikar (The Seven Beauties)*.

[2] Excerpts are from the section 'Stayesh Sukhan-o-Hikmat-o-Andurz' (translated by Wilson as 'On the excellence of speech. Counsel to the people'). Line divisions have been ignored.

[3] Parallels may also be drawn, though not as completely as here, between *The Tempest* and *The Conference of the Birds* by the twelfth century Persian poet Sheikh Fariduddin Attar (a contemporary of Nezami Ganjavi and a major influence on Rumi as well as Iqbal).

[4] The italicized lines are the famous first four from Sonnet 55 by Shakespeare (line divisions have been ignored). Passages quoted here from Nezami are taken from *Haft Paykar*, the section titled 'Khatm-i-Kitab-o-Dua-i-Karp Arsalan' (translated by Wilson as 'Words in Conclusion').

3: The Human Spirit

1 Lines 184-88, *Masnavi Maanavi, Volume II* by Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. For the original Persian text I have consulted the version edited by R.A. Nicholson, published by Majeed Publications, Tehran. Translation is loosely based on R.A. Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi* published by Konya Metropolitan Municipality, Konya.

2 *Tauhid* [Unity], an Urdu magazine published from Meeruth, August 1, 1913. From Rahim Bakhsh Shaheen (1975): *Auraq-i-Gumgashta.*

3 See details in my biography of the formative phase of Iqbal: *Iqbal—Tashkeeli Daur, 1905-13,* published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan (2009).

4 Translation has been modified from *The Tulip of Sinai* by Mustansir Mir (published by C. Hurst & Co., London (2000).

5 The two "mirrors" listed here are larger than life and apparently antonymous to the objects they mirror: (a) the river's flow belongs to the earth while the red glow of dawn is on the sky; and (b) silence is obviously the opposite of a song. Yet they mirror the objects opposed to them, just as Prospero's banishment was an adversity that was necessary so that his real worth may find a "mirror" for itself. This illustrates the first postulate of Iqbal's philosophy of the self, "*that the system of the universe originates in the self and that the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the self.*" Self-affirmation brings *not-self* to light, as explained in 'The Secrets of the Self':

> By the self the seed of opposition is sown in the world:
> It imagines itself to be other than itself.
> It makes from itself the forms of others
> In order to multiply the pleasure of strife.
> It is slaying by the strength of its arm

That it may become conscious of its own strength.
(Translation is modified from R.A. Nicholson,
The Secrets of the Self)

6 As compared to the previous, the mirrors in this couplet are either an effect of the object itself, or the object is an effect of theirs: (a) the rose-leaf is a part of the spring's beautiful cheek; whereas (b) the chamber of the cup shapes the form of the liquid as well as mirroring it. This is the relationship, respectively, between (a) Prospero's art and (a) the subjugation of the elves and other such elements of Nature; and (b) the liberation of Ariel. It also explains the second postulate of Iqbal's philosophy of the self, *"that the life of the self comes from forming ideals and bringing them to birth."*

7 The third conflict is between Miranda and Caliban, and since Miranda is identifiable with Shakespeare's poetry, it is quite satisfactory that this third couplet should mention Shakespeare's "speech" as a mirror to human heart. The first mirror, although an unworthy mirror, informing about Miranda's coming of age is indeed Caliban – identified by Coleridge as "all earth, all condensed and gross in feelings and images... the dawnings of understanding without reason or the moral sense, and... this advance to the intellectual faculties, without the moral sense, is marked by the appearance of vice."

The idea of Caliban as "a mirror" to Miranda is indeed a disturbing idea. Classicists were appalled so much by the suggestion that Dryden and his co-writer found it necessary to replace this element in the play with a more befitting "mirror" by introducing a male character whom Prospero had brought up in complete isolation like Miranda herself, and unknown to her. When Miranda is suddenly taken to see him, they become perfect mirrors to each other. This may be satisfactory from a Platonic perspective but unfortunately, as Coleridge observed, this "vulgar alteration" also removed

from the play the possibility of Miranda's meeting with Ferdinand the way it happens in Shakespeare and whatever it entails (which becomes more significant in the light of the next couplet from Iqbal's poem). Hence Caliban's initial response is not a personification of the kind of heart that could reflect the beauty of Miranda (or of Shakespeare's verse for that matter), but it nevertheless proves the possibility of such a heart as an ideal to be achieved. Such a heart already throbs in the breast of Prospero (and its beating would be heard in another, i.e. Ferdinand, at the next stage):

> For it is in the primacy of the moral being only that man is truly human; in his intellectual powers he is certainly approached by the brutes, and, man's whole system duly considered, those powers cannot be considered other than means to an end—that is, to morality. (Coleridge, *op. cit.*)

Nezami Ganjavi, Shakespeare, Coleridge and Iqbal are among poets who identified verbal art with the perfection of Beauty itself – Nezami called the human language the prettiest thing created by Divine command and Coleridge perceived Miranda as personifying the poetry of Shakespeare. This third couplet of Iqbal's poem is obviously resonating with the famous last lines of 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' by John Keats:

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty– that is all
> Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.

Whereas the immediate (but by no means the only) association of this "beauty" in the poem of Keats is music ("therefore, ye soft pipes, play on"), Iqbal introduces a scheme of four entities, real as compared to the metaphorical "mirrors" of the previous couplets:

- Truth (synonymous to God): its mirror is Beauty
- Beauty: its mirror is the heart

- The human heart: its mirror is Shakespeare's verse
- Shakespeare's verse: its mirror hasn't been named

In a subtle manner, Iqbal has distinguished between "the heart" and "the human heart." As he had stated in an earlier Urdu poem 'On Seeing a Cat in the Lap of Someone' (1911), "Perception of Beauty is not exclusive to the human being: like the heart, it is present in everything." Caliban's response to Miranda is this basic "perception of beauty" which can be attributed even to a cat (as in the other poem of Iqbal). Caliban represents a heart but it's not a human heart, for the human heart is defined, in Iqbal's terms and Nezami's, as a thing that can recognize the perfect word as its mirror. Hence, "the heart" and "the human heart" become two aspects, out of which the first perceives forms and the second meaning. All hearts can respond to beauty but the human heart seeks the beauty of verbal art as a mirror. Caliban has the first but doesn't have the second, and hence his only profit on language is that he knows how to curse.

The ability to recognize in the verbal art a true mirror is acquired by Life when it comes face to face with the Word of God: "The Rahman (i.e. God the Beneficent), taught the Quran, created the human being and taught him (or her) speech" (Quran, Chapter 53, Verses 1-4). Natural theology cannot transcend Setebos (a point made abundantly clear by Robert Browning in the famous poem which must have been very familiar to Iqbal). Divine revelation is required.

Since there can be no further revelation binding on humanity after Prophet Muhammad, according to Islam, Muslim literary thought has rested on the idea that "poetry is part of prophet-hood." By disregarding this central concept of Muslim literary thought, one cannot understand what Nezami said about language, why Abdur Rahman Jami called the *Masnavi* of Rumi "Quran in the Persian language" or why in this third couplet of the poem on Shakespeare, Iqbal didn't

need to tell us that if the human heart is mirrored in Shakespeare's verse then what is the mirror in which that verse views itself? The unspoken answer is that Truth (whose mirror is Beauty) is itself the mirror in which Shakespeare's poetry looks.

This type of phenomenon is elaborated by Iqbal, with reference to Rumi, in a Persian poem in *Payam-i-Mashriq* (A Message from the East; 1923), where poets are discussing their craft in heaven. Robert Browning says, "There was nothing to fortify life's effervescent wine. I took some Water of Life from Khizr and added it." Lord Byron comments, "Why should one be obliged to Khizr for his water's loan? I poured a little of my heart's blood into the wine-cup." The great Indian poet Mirza Ghalib says, "To make the wine still bitterer and my chest still more sore, I melted the glass itself and added it to my wine." Rumi speaks last, and says, "How can dilutions be as good as the real stuff itself? I pressed wine out of grapes direct and filled my cup with it." The same could be true of Shakespeare and this would explain, not only the meaning of Truth itself becoming a mirror for his poetry, but also the entry in Iqbal's private notebook written in 1910: "*To explain the deepest truths of life in the form of homely parables requires extraordinary genius. Shakespeare, Maulana Rum (Jalaluddin) and Jesus Christ are probably the only illustrations of this rare type of genius.*"

8 Ferdinand's falling in love with Miranda is an illustration of how Prospero is able to channel free will through systematic arrangement of circumstances. This is what Shakespeare does to his audience through his craft, and hence he rethinks the thought of Divine Creation. A higher achievement in verbal art is unimaginable (The day Shakespeare saw that he had been rethinking the thought of Divine Creation must have been when he came to know that he wouldn't need to be writing forever).

[9] Survivors of the shipwreck have been divided into two major parties (apart from minor roles) in the play. The first consists mainly of King Alonso, Gonzalo, Antonio and Sebastian. They are familiar with Prospero but as they try to find the source of the miraculous things happening to them, they do not know that they are actually looking for Prospero. Still, they are interacting with him through the games he is playing on them.

[10] Another party of survivors is Stephano and Trinculo, who do not know Prospero. They are plotting against him with Caliban, but Prospero, hidden from their view, is keeping surveillance through Ariel.

[11] It is Nature itself to whom Prospero promises that he shall break his staff, burn his book and abjure his art ("Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves..."). Iqbal seems to understand that Shakespeare also had to do the same because, as Iqbal wrote in his private notebook:

> The world-spirit conceals the various phases of her inner life in symbols. The universe is nothing but a great symbol. But she never takes the trouble to interpret these symbols for us. It is the duty of the poet to interpret these symbols for us. It is the duty of the poet to interpret them and to reveal their meaning to humanity. It would, therefore, appear that the poet and the world-spirit are opposed to each other; since the former reveals what the latter conceals (See *Stray Reflections,* p.95).